

## REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of all grounds of rejection are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1-17 were rejected in an Office Action mailed June 6, 2005. By entry of an Amendment filed October 31, 2005, claims 1-2, 5, 13 and 14 were amended and new claims 18-21 were added. In response to a Restriction Requirement mailed March 27, 2006, the Applicant elected claims 1-12 and 15-21. In this Amendment, claim 18 has been amended. Consequently, claims 1-12 and 15-21 are pending.

For sake of brevity, the Applicants' undersigned representative has chosen to not repeat arguments made in the Amendment filed October 31, 2005. Nonetheless, the Examiner is requested to consider the arguments here and reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-17 is respectfully requested.

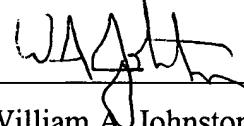
Claim 18 has been amended to better define the invention. Claim 18 is directed an adjustable length lock for securing a coupler having a coupler latch to a hitch ball. The lock includes a lock body and shaft. The shaft is insertable sequentially through the coupler latch and lock body opening from either of two opposing insertion directions with respect to the lock body, with the coupler latch in a closed position and the coupler in contact with the hitch ball. Such engagement of the locking plate with one of the shaft recesses does not allow movement of the shaft through the lock body in an opposing direction relative to the insertion direction unless the locking mechanism is unlocked. None of the cited prior art teaches or suggests a lock device wherein the shaft can be inserted in either of two opposing directions with respect to the lock body. For at least this reason, independent claim 18 is believed to be allowable.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims of this application are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims of this application is respectfully solicited. Furthermore, if the Examiner believes that additional discussions or information might advance the prosecution of

this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 11/17/06

  
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